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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 248 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY EICHELBERGER AND DINNIMAN, DECEMBER 7, 2017

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REFERRED TO EDUCATION, DECEMBER 7, 2017

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A RESOLUTION

1 Opposing the use of the Keystone Exams for the purpose of  
2 Federal accountability without alternatives under the  
3 Commonwealth's Every Student Succeeds plan, opposing their  
4 use as a sole requirement for graduation and calling on the  
5 United States Department of Education and the Department of  
6 Education of the Commonwealth to authorize alternatives in  
7 Pennsylvania's Every Student Succeeds plan.

8 WHEREAS, In December 2006, the Governor's Commission on  
9 College and Career Success issued a report detailing  
10 recommendations designed to "move Pennsylvania towards  
11 increasing the educational achievement of all of its students to  
12 meet the challenges of the 21st century economy" and proposed  
13 that all students be required to demonstrate proficiency in  
14 State standards via end of course tests; and

15 WHEREAS, At the time of the commission's report, all students  
16 were required to take the 11th grade Pennsylvania System of  
17 School Assessment (PSSA) exam, the scores of which were used to  
18 evaluate schools under the requirements of No Child Left Behind,  
19 not to evaluate individual students for purposes of graduation;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, In 2012, the Keystone Exams were implemented as both

1 a component of Pennsylvania's system of assessment for Federal  
2 accountability and as a high school graduation requirement, with  
3 the exams being end-of-course assessments designed to ultimately  
4 assess proficiency in numerous subjects: algebra I, algebra II,  
5 geometry, literature, English composition, biology, chemistry,  
6 United States history, world history and civics and government;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, By 2015, the time, resources and energy required for  
9 implementation of supplemental instruction and the administering  
10 and scoring of project-based assessment alternatives and exams  
11 proved to be a substantial and growing burden on students,  
12 schools and educators; and

13 WHEREAS, In February 2016, the Governor signed Act 1 of 2016  
14 into law, which law delayed the Keystone Exam/PBA graduation  
15 requirement for a period of two years to give policymakers an  
16 opportunity to thoughtfully consider options for students to  
17 demonstrate readiness for postsecondary success in addition to  
18 Keystone Exams; and

19 WHEREAS, Act 1 of 2016 also required the Department of  
20 Education of the Commonwealth to investigate alternative options  
21 for a State-level graduation requirement and to provide  
22 recommendations to the General Assembly of the Commonwealth; and

23 WHEREAS, Act 55 of 2017 further delayed the requirement that  
24 Keystone Exams be used as a graduation requirement or as a  
25 benchmark for the need to participate in a project-based  
26 assessment until the 2019-2020 school year, as the  
27 recommendations of the Act 1 of 2016 report have yet to be  
28 implemented; and

29 WHEREAS, It has been widely recognized that multiple valid  
30 measures exist for students to demonstrate the knowledge and

1 skills necessary to be college and career ready, yet alternative  
2 measures have not been incorporated into the State plan;  
3 therefore be it

4       RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
5 oppose the continued use of the Keystone Exams as a single high-  
6 stakes graduation requirement and urge the Department of  
7 Education of the Commonwealth to develop alternative assessments  
8 for Federal accountability purposes which also demonstrate  
9 career or college readiness as soon as possible for timely  
10 inclusion in Pennsylvania's Every Student Succeeds plan; and be  
11 it further

12       RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the  
13 United States Department of Education and the Department of  
14 Education of the Commonwealth.